

GRULAC UNCTAD
GENEVA

Statement by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Tenth Session of the Trade and Development Commission

Geneva, 12 - 16 November 2018

Mr. President, H.E. Mr. Aliyar Lebbe Abdul AZEEZ (Sri Lanka),
Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Director, Division on International Trade and Commodities, UNCTAD
Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
Ambassadors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is an honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). The Group would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this session, as well as to congratulate all incoming officers for their election.
2. I also wish to warmly welcome Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, the new Director of the Division on International Trade and Commodities. At the outset, allow me to convey to you the full support of our region in achieving the goals that you have set for UNCTAD, as outlined on your introductory remarks.
3. GRULAC would like to thank the Secretariat for the Note prepared for this agenda item. The discussion of Trade, multilateral cooperation and sustainable development is by all means, more relevant than ever, in the current global context.
4. Overall, multilateral trade and cooperation have contributed to improve health, reduce poverty, and boost economic growth. In the same line, the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through financing for development, as stated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, serve as guiding lights to overcome developmental challenges.
5. GRULAC sees with concern how regardless of the growth of trade in goods and services, the achievement of the Goals related to trade is far from fulfilled. In this line, the Group agrees that in order to do so, structural and external elements need to be addressed, such as commodity and international price dependency, connectivity, trade facilitation and issues related to non-tariff measures. Likewise, cooperation and South-South trade have demonstrated their relevance for developing countries, providing opportunities for product diversification, domestic capacity-building and higher sophistication.
6. The linkage between trade and sustainable development is undeniable. The way in which we address its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental, rests in the way we, as policy-makers, design those policies and trade rules. GRULAC welcomes the Secretariat's effort in reflecting in the room document the specific Goals in which Trade and sustainable development are referenced. Important steps towards achieving sustainable development through trade can be depicted, for example, through trade facilitation where UNCTAD was a pioneer on this effort and the ASYCUDA program is its poster child. Also, the GSP and DF/QF market access programs, and the adoption of the Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, have marked important milestones in the assistance to least developed countries.

7. Regarding the increasing use of protectionist measures, GRULAC wishes to express its rejection to any kind of action that diminishes or disregards the rules-based framework of the World Trade Organization, including the systemic functioning of the Appellate Body. The Group calls upon all members to join efforts in strengthening and defending the multilateral trading system, which has been fundamental to the progress of, and has benefitted specially, developing countries.

8. Actions towards addressing major development challenges are on their way. Differences on how to move forward in the discussions at the WTO remain, with new initiatives for discussion and pending Doha issues still on the table. However, negotiations on fisheries subsidies appear to be on a better track and could reach an agreement for the next Ministerial Conference. GRULAC encourages the building of consensus at the multilateral level and will continue to work in that same line.

9. The group would also like to congratulate UNCTAD on the 50th anniversary of its Review of Maritime Transport Publication. The publication shows that many developing countries and LDCs, are confronted with high transport costs and low levels of shipping connectivity. The smaller and more vulnerable countries often find it difficult to ensure that technological advances and operational improvements made in the industry are passed on to the exporters in the form of better services and lower freight costs. The group requests UNCTAD to continue and enhance its monitoring, research, analysis, advisory services and provision of statistics of international transport connectivity and transport costs.

Mr. President,

10. We also welcome the reports from the different expert groups that report to this commission. We thank the Secretariat for their work in preparing these meetings, as well as the engagement of member States in the discussions, which covered many topics of interest for GRULAC such as the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy; the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development; Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development; and the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation

11. Before I conclude, let me just remark that the members of GRULAC who are part of the Group of 77 and China associate ourselves with the statement made by that Group.